

CITY OF ALAMO HEIGHTS
CITY COUNCIL
February 8, 2010

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Alamo Heights, Texas was held at the Council Chambers, 6120 Broadway, at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, February 8, 2010.

Present and composing a quorum were:

Mayor Louis Cooper
Mayor Pro-Tempore Susan Harwell
Councilmember Stan McCormick
Councilmember Bobby Rosenthal
Councilmember Jill Souter

Also attending were:

City Manager Ann Benson McGlone
Assistant City Manager/Public Works Director Shawn P. Eddy
City Attorney Mike Brenan
Communication/IT Manager Marian Ramirez
Finance Director Cynthia Barr
Community Development Director Brian Chandler
Human Resource Manager/Deputy City Secretary Judith E. Surratt
City Secretary Jennifer Reyna
Assistant Fire Chief Buddy Kuhn
Police Chief Rick Pruitt

Absent was:

Fire Chief Bill Hagendorf

* * *

Mayor Louis Cooper called the meeting to order at 5: 35 p.m.

* * *

Mayor Cooper asked City Council for any corrections to the minutes of the January 25, 2010, City Council Meeting. A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Harwell to approve the minutes of January 25, 2010. The motion was seconded by Councilmember McCormick and passed by 4 ayes and 0 nays.

* * *

Item # 2 City Manager's Report

- a. Briefing on the implementation of 25 mph speed limit on certain residential streets**

Police Chief Rick Pruitt provided a briefing on the implementation process of 25 mph speed limit on certain residential streets. Newspaper publications were in the *North Central News* on December 24th and 31st and the *San Antonio Express-News* on January 18th. Currently, a utility survey is being conducted. In approximately two weeks the survey shall be completed and the installation of all replacement and new signs reflecting the 25 mph speed limit will begin.

b. Community Interest

1. Community Garden

Community Development Director Brian Chandler announced the formation of a Community Garden Committee. Currently 19 residents have expressed interest and a meeting is proposed in March. If you are interested in participating in a community garden, please contact Mr. Chandler at (210) 832-2250 or via email, bchandler@alamoheightstx.gov.

2. Design Workshop on the Dog Park

Community Development Director Brian Chandler invited the community to attend a Design Workshop to gather community input for a proposed dog park. The workshop is scheduled for Saturday, February 27th from 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. at the City Council Chambers. A banner will be displayed in front of City Hall beginning on Monday, February 15th and information will also be placed in the February newsletter as reminders. For more information please contact Mr. Chandler at (210) 832-2250 or via email, bchandler@alamoheightstx.gov.

Mayor Cooper suggested producing flyers and placing in veterinarian's offices located in the Alamo Heights area, and in pet supply stores located on Austin Highway and Broadway.

c. Alamo Heights Night

Assistant City Manager/Public Works Director Shawn P. Eddy announced that Alamo Heights Rotary Club is moving Alamo Heights Night to the University of the Incarnate Word Campus. Increased attendance and expansion of the event were key factors in moving to new location. Information will also be in the February newsletter. Mr. Eddy congratulated the Alamo Heights Rotary Club on their new venue.

Rick Heydenreich, representative of the Alamo Heights Rotary Club, thanked City Council and stated the Rotary Club is looking forward to the event to becoming bigger and better.

*

*

*

Citizens To Be Heard Concerning Non-Agenda Items

Margaret Houston, 140 Patterson Avenue, announced that last year, 2009, marked the 5th annual tradition of holiday dinners for Fire and Police Staff. Meals were provided to Fire and Police Staff on Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. Ms. Houston read the names of everyone that contributed to the 5th annual tradition of holiday dinners.

Margaret Spencer, 140 Patterson Avenue, expressed disappointment about the holiday dinners not being mentioned in the city's newsletter. She expressed that donors including herself would like to request that the newsletter's article be corrected to acknowledge that holiday dinners were provided to Fire and Police Staff.

*

*

*

Items for Individual Consideration

Item # 4 Mayor Cooper read the following caption.

ORDINANCE NO. 1855

AN ORDINANCE ORDERING A GENERAL ELECTION IN THE CITY OF ALAMO HEIGHTS, TEXAS, TO BE HELD ON THE 8TH DAY OF MAY, 2010, FOR THE ELECTION OF THREE COUNCIL MEMBERS FOR PLACES THREE (3), FOUR (4), AND FIVE (5); PROVIDING THE DETAILS THEREFORE AND PROVIDING FOR A PROCLAMATION AND NOTICE OF SUCH GENERAL ELECTION AND DESIGNATING JACQUELYN F. CALLANEN, BEXAR COUNTY ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATOR, AS THE ELECTION ADMINISTRATOR TO CONDUCT SAID ELECTION

City Secretary Jennifer Reyna read the caption in Spanish.

A motion for approval was made by Councilmember McCormick. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Harwell. The motion passed by 4 ayes and 0 nays.

Item # 5 Mayor Cooper read the following caption.

AN ORDINANCE REPEALING CURRENT CHAPTER 5 AND ADOPTING A NEW REPLACEMENT CHAPTER 5 ALAMO HEIGHTS CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES

Community Development Director Brian Chandler made a PowerPoint presentation that included code and fee amendments and a public input timeline. Staff recommended approval.

Mr. Chandler presented information related to Item Nos. 5 and 6 together as one presentation. He provided the public input timeline that included feedback from architects, business owners, contractors and property owners. Chapter 5 proposed amendments were also coordinated with the Building Regulatory Advisory Committee, which consisted of six development and design professionals, and the Neighborhood Character and Commercial Revitalization Committee. Mr. Chandler is meeting with business and property owners.

Mr. Chandler mentioned email comments received from Pruyn Hildebrand and Bill Orr. Ms. Hildebrand opposed Chapter 5 amendments and expressed concern on other articles within Chapter 5. Mr. Orr, Chairman of the Board of Adjustment, supported Chapter 5 amendments.

The following citizens spoke on this matter:

John Grable, 208 Wildrose Avenue, member of the Planning and Zoning Commission, supported the proposed language in Chapter 5 and stated it is easier for the common man to understand. Mr. Grable also supported the additional drainage language. At another opportunity, he will speak in detail about the 50 foot wide lots that contribute to impervious coverage.

Councilmember Souter added that she had received comments from the community that the permitting process was long and scattered within the Code of Ordinances and it should be streamlined. She asked Mr. Grable if the proposed revisions assisted the homeowner.

Mr. Grable responded the permitting process saves time and utilizes city staff to its fullest potential. He commented that there should be no fees related to green building standards.

Richard Garison, 524 Evans Avenue, expressed his support of Chapter 5 modifications to enhance the health, safety and welfare of the community. He stated Chapter 5 currently contains language of confusion. He favorably supported the revised demolition process that allows staff to administratively approve the request to allow homeowners address hazardous conditions into safety improvements. Mr. Garison provided several examples from a construction perspective. He added that he has never encountered commercial properties that did not require Certificate of Occupancy and the lack of requirement is a safety issue.

George Geis, property owner in Alamo Heights, requested additional 30 days for City Council to approve Chapter 5 amendments. He expressed his dislike of "partnership" used as describing the relationship with the City and property owners as presented in Mr. Chandler's presentation because there is no financial relationship between the City and property owners and he requested language to be changed. Mr. Geis expressed Chapter 5 was unclear on several topics and had not seen proposed changes related to apartments. He also expressed that he was omitted on public notifications on the proposed changes, however; he is currently working with Mr. Chandler.

Councilmember McCormick stated he values Mr. Geis' input and is favorable in declaring additional time for property owners to review.

Councilmember Rosenthal stated that everyone needs to be included and asked Mr. Chandler if the feedback on Multi-family units and Certificate of Occupancy will be incorporated into the next draft summary.

Mr. Chandler responded to Councilmember Rosenthal that it has been updated in the summary, providing a clearer language.

David Monnich, 124 Castano Avenue, member of the Architectural Review Board and the Building Regulatory Advisory Committee, stated that revisions to Chapter 5 allow the city to address the challenges on different issues, allows true architectural review, additional public input, and timely actions.

John Hertz, 316 Harrison Avenue, expressed concern on the demolition process and noted Chapter 5 has not captured the significance of historical buildings. Mr. Hertz strongly encouraged the City to allow deconstruction to utilize recycled materials, and establish green building standards. He referenced that the City of San Antonio is going to pass an ordinance related to historical buildings.

Mayor Cooper asked Mr. Hertz about the City of San Antonio's process related to historical buildings. Mr. Hertz explained the process and emphasized that the City of San Antonio may refuse a demolition permit because the structure may be within a designated historical zone.

There was discussion among City Council regarding historical designation by the homeowner or the city.

Margaret Houston, 140 Patterson Avenue, stated she supported the creation of inventory lists of historical structures.

Mr. Chandler responded to Ms. Houston that the city is in the beginning of an inventory process.

Mayor Pro Tem Harwell commented about declaring an additional 30-day delay and she thanked the Neighborhood Character and Commercial Revitalization Committee and the Building Regulatory Advisory Committee for their time and expressed her appreciation on the community's feedback.

Councilmember Souter commended staff for their work and dedication over the past 2-year period. She appreciated staff's coordination with the Neighborhood Character and Commercial Revitalization Committee and the Building Regulatory Advisory Committee for their time and valuable input.

Councilmember Souter asked Mr. Chandler to work with Communication/IT Manager Marian Ramirez to place additional information on the City's website. Councilmember Souter requested that a link that allows comments to be submitted to the

Community Development Department be added on the website. Councilmember Souter thanked Mr. David Monnich for his community service as a member of the Architectural Review Board.

A motion for approval was made by Councilmember Rosenthal to table Item Nos. 5 and 6 until the March 8th, 2010 City Council Meeting as an update and/or possible City Council Action. The motion was seconded by Councilmember McCormick. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Item # 6 Mayor Cooper read the following caption.

**AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING A SEPARATE SCHEDULE OF
DEVELOPMENT FEES**

A motion for approval was made by Councilmember Rosenthal to table Item Nos. 5 and 6 until the March 8th, 2010 City Council Meeting as an update and/or possible City Council Action. The motion was seconded by Councilmember McCormick. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

* * *

Staff Reports

Item # 7 **Presentation of Financial and Investment Report for the first quarter
ending December 31, 2009**

Finance Director Cynthia Barr provided a PowerPoint Presentation that summarized the City's financial position. The Financial and Investment Report included General Fund Revenues/Expenditures, Utility Fund Revenues/Expenditures, and an Investment Portfolio Update.

She reviewed first quarter actuals and the first quarter investment summary. She noted that the earning yields should read 0.19% instead of 0.09%. Ms. Barr credited the departments for overseeing their budget.

Ms. Barr reported that the city's financial position remains strong.

Councilmember Rosenthal noted that the investment income was under budget and if the City is covered for the shortfall or should the City be conservative next year. Ms. Barr anticipates incoming tax revenues increase investments and the economy to steadily become stronger. Councilmember Rosenthal asked if the 4th quarter of each calendar year generates more sales tax revenue because of holiday spending. Ms. Barr confirmed that holiday spending does contribute to the increased sales tax revenue and stated that it does not include the street sales tax. She stated that the city is within projections but may be low because of local businesses that have closed.

Councilmember Souter asked Ms. Barr if she had received any appraisal information from Bexar Appraisals and if not when will we get them. Ms. Barr stated that

preliminary reports are normally received in April. Ms. Barr reported there were several residents concerned that exemptions were lost in 2009, when actually the CAP value which is the untaxed portion of the appraised value was dropped and reflect on their statements as a decrease in exemptions. She explained the exemption change to residents as they called or came into City Hall. If tax values continues to decrease, there may be concerns in the coming year but its unpredictable at this time.

*

*

*

There being no further business, a motion was made by Councilmember Souter to adjourn the meeting. A motion was seconded by Councilmember McCormick and passed by unanimous vote. Mayor Cooper adjourned the meeting at 7:12 p.m.



Louis Cooper
Mayor



Jennifer Reyna, TRMC
City Secretary